

advances in their divine life, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrections of the dead, and of eternal judgment." Here then are six principles which form the beginning of the Christian life—repentance, faith, baptism, the laying on of hands, and the belief in the resurrection and eternal judgment. Can we take any of them away as unnecessary? Have the Saviour and His Apostles made any difference as to the binding nature of one above another? Is repentance necessary? Is faith necessary? All admit this to be binding upon us; and, if so, where, I ask, is the authority for rejecting baptism and the laying on of hands? If there be any, we must find it in the Book of God. But in it we see that they are principles of our holy faith, and can never be rejected. And you will observe that the Church follows most closely the requisitions of the Apostles. She requires in adults who desire to be baptized, that they repent truly of their sins, and have unfeigned faith in Christ; then comes baptism, and then the laying on of hands, or Confirmation. The Word of God is her standard, and Christ and His Apostles her guides. She stops not to inquire about the fitness of the means to produce the desired result. The authority of Christ and the practice of the Apostles, acting under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, who was to lead them into all truth, is enough to sanction all her acts, and to make her cling with firmness to those good old paths over which thousands have passed into blissful eternity. We think that you will conclude with us that Confirmation is sanctioned by the Word of God, and if so, it is necessary for all. But we need not stop here. We shall find that what was commenced by the Apostles was continued by their successors, the Bishops, in all periods of the Christian Church. I would refer you to the evidence furnished by those who lived nearest the days of the Apostles, some of whom conversed with them, and were instructed by them in the doctrines and duties of our holy religion. And I do not ask for their opinions: they may be right or they may be wrong. The Church never rests upon their opinions, and never resorts to these opinions to prove the truth of Scriptures, or to establish the practice of the early Church. She only calls them as good witnesses to facts; to tell us what were the doctrines held, and the practices followed in their day. We cannot do without this testimony to establish the books of Scripture, and we rely upon it also to prove what was the faith as well as the practice once delivered to the saints. Tertullian, who lived only eighty years after St. John, speaks of Confirmation as a custom universally prevalent in his time, and of course he must have known whether it had been

observed in the Church from the Apostles' day down to his own time. He says, "after baptism is laying on of hands, by blessing and prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit, who graciously descends from the Father upon the bodies cleansed and blessed by baptism." Cyprian, the Bishop of Carthage, who lived fifty years later, writes thus, "those who are baptized in the Church are offered to the Bishop of the Church, and by our prayer and imposition of hands, receive the Holy Ghost and are consecrated by the sign of the Lord." Jerome, who lived 300 years after the Apostles, says, "the Bishop visited all the lesser cities, and by the imposition of hands, invoked the Holy Spirit upon those who had been baptized by the Presbyters and Deacons." And again he says, "Do you demand where we find an authority for Confirmation? I answer, in the Acts of the Apostles. But although we could produce no positive authority from Scripture, yet the consent and practice of the whole world in this respect would have the force of a commandment." Such is a part of the testimony of those who lived nearest to the days of the Apostles.

Concluded in our next.

#### Constitution of the Church in the United States.

THE Church (in the United States) has undoubtedly accepted the principle of a general diffusion of power among her members. In some dioceses it is even universal; every person who has been in any way received into connection with her, being entitled to vote in the parochial meetings, which are her primary electoral assemblies and furnish the basis of her whole electoral system. In other dioceses the principle has been admitted of some payment towards the parochial expenses. In some individual congregations, where church edifices have been built on the pew system, the ownership or renting of a pew or part of a pew, is required as one of the qualifications for a vote. To this extent, the principle of a property qualification has been admitted; but it is by no means a Church principle. On the contrary, it is a violation of Church principle. The Church undoubtedly looks upon all her members as equal; except so far as her Divine Constitution arranges them into orders. The abolition of all such qualifications would be a step towards adapting the government of the Church to the spirit of the civil government, which we should willingly see taken.

With respect to the equal distribution of power, the Church is unable fully to adopt that